

AF hosts priorities and allocations conference

by Pete Meltzer
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Representatives from several Department of Defense agencies gathered in Indianapolis recently for the Defense Priorities and Allocations System 2000 training conference.

There, nearly 100 key DPAS representatives from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Defense Logistics Agency and the Defense Contract Management Agency spoke with speakers and panelists to learn more about the priorities and allocations system.

The mission of the DPAS is to assure the timely availability of materials, facilities and services to support the armed forces and allies during both peacetime and contingencies, by

requiring preferential contract performance. Under DPAS, special priority assistance is used to expedite delivery of critical defense items ranging from munitions to global positioning systems.

"This special priorities assistance was used during Desert Storm, Desert Shield, Operation Joint Endeavor and Operation Allied Force," said James Neely, Air Force Materiel Command DPAS program manager. "It allows us to make a higher priority request of a manufacturer or supplier in order to meet the needs of national defense."

DPAS is a feature of Title I of the Defense Production Act, and as such, represents law. Executive orders delegate authority to carry out the provisions of DPAS to the Department of Commerce.

Neely provides oversight for the statutory provisions of the DPAS for AFMC and provides special priorities assistance in support of urgently needed material when the problem cannot be resolved at the field activity level. "Following the provisions of the DPAS is a legal requirement for everyone who receives contracts or orders that have a priority rating under the DPAS," Neely explained. "So it just makes good business sense to be familiar with the system."

Confronted with considerable reorganization and personnel turnover across Air Force and other DoD agencies, the deputy undersecretary of defense asked the Air Force to host this DPAS training conference. Before the main conference, Neely and Rick Meyers, of the Department of Com-

merce, provided a tutorial for newly assigned people.

"The conference met all of our training goals and also opened the door for future conferences," Neely said.

The industry keynote speaker for the conference was Charles H. Davis III, of Boeing, who spoke on the "Joint Direct Attack Munition — The Kosovo Experience and DPAS." During this presentation of the effectiveness of the JDAM system in Operation Allied Force, Davis indicated that schedule acceleration drove JDAM's necessity to pursue special priorities assistance through DPAS.

Other key industry speakers included Dean Johnson, of Honeywell, and James Muehleisen, of Motorola.